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AIR COMMAND
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┌─── STUDENT REPORT ───┐
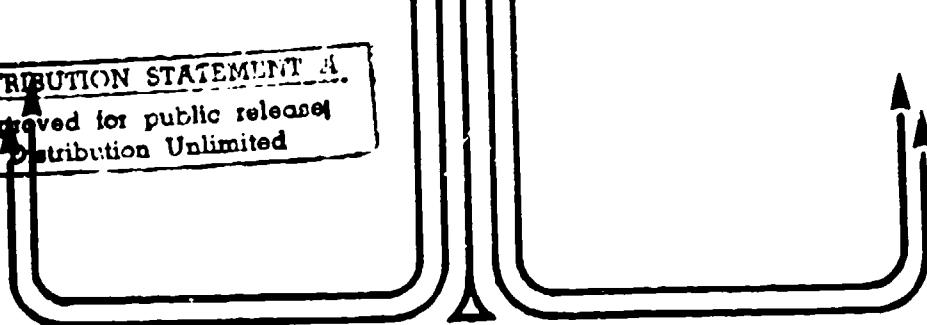AFOSI, FRIEND OR FOE?
SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES
AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
MAJOR GEORGE MICHAEL MCKEE   87-1695
└── *"insights into tomorrow"* ──┘

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This project examines how the Air Force Office of Special Investigation's (AFOSI) image, based on aspects of its mission, could affect its performance at the AF base level due to basic psychological factors involved in individual and group behavior. The project focuses on AFOSI's relationship with the base commander and his staff. It looks at how aspects of the AFOSI mission--like wearing civilian clothes--impact on these relationships. It provides the psychological reasons for the impact and possible methods to address these factors.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major George M. McKee obtained his degree in Business
Administration from Texas A + M University. He was
commissioned in the USAF in 1972 and his first assignment was
Patrick AFB, Florida. He then received initial Air Force
Office of Investigation (AFOSI) training and returned to
Patrick AFB as a Special Agent. In 1974 he was assigned as the
Commander of the local AFOSI office. Later that year he was
assigned as an AFOSI counterintelligence specialist in Udorn,
Thailand. In 1975 he was transfered to RAF Wethersfield,
England. He served there as an AFOSI staff officer in charge
of human sources of information and criminal investigations.
In 1978 Major Mckee was reassigned to Headquarters AFOSI in
Washington, DC. From 1980 until 1983 he was the Commander of
the AFOSI Detachment at the USAF Academy in Colorado. During
that period, his office was selected as the outstanding AFOSI
Detachment of Year, and he was selected as the AFOSI Junior
Officer of the Year. After that assignment, he was transfered
to Yokota AB, Japan. He served there as an AFOSI staff officer
until his assignment to the Air Command and Staff College,
Alabama, in 1986. His professional affiliations have included:
the Federal Criminal Investigators Association, The American
Society of Industrial Security, and The International Chiefs of
Police Association. He is married to the former Robin E.
Larson of Cocoa Beach, Florida, and they have two children:
Brittany Ann and Sean Michael McKee.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

When someone mentions the "IRS" most people immediately
assume they are about to hear a tale of woe from the speaker.
They do not assume they will hear compliments concerning the
organization or even a story with a happy ending. Why is
that? The IRS has a negative image based on its mission:
collecting taxes. When the "CIA" is mentioned, most people do
not think of unsung heroes protecting America. They think of
dirty tricks, covert actions, or the Bay of Pigs. The CIA is
another organization with a negative image based, to a certain
degree, on its mission. This project looks at how an
organization's image, and consequently its performance, may be
negatively affected by the organization's mission due to basic
psychological factors involved in organizational behavior. For
the purpose of this paper, "image" refers to how the

organization is perceived by individuals, groups, and organizations outside the organization in question.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to show that certain image problems caused by an organization's mission are based on basic psychological principles, assumptions, and research; and to make recommendations on how an organization can recognize and address this--apparently--neglected problem area. Mayo felt that management based on a formal structure of relationships prescribed in organizational charts is incomplete. Mayo's evidence showed that psychological and sociological aspects were significant factors to be considered (Defense Management Study Group on Military Cohesion, 1984). Has this theory been taken far enough? Northrop and Perry, in their study on the task environment, stated that

> prior organizational assessments have not explored
> how characteristics such as the location or type of
> service provided by the government unit may affect
> its perceived effectiveness. However, support exists
> for the view that the type of service provided by an
> agency can inherently affect its performance ...
> (Northrop and Perry, 1985).

Units that provided a physical service--for example, construction--had a higher likelihood of being judged more

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effective than a unit that provided a human service. They felt
that "The stability of these findings suggests that systemic
factors such as location and type of service provided may be
important explanations of differences in performance ratings"
(Northrop, 1985). Flanders, Carlson, and Klauss pointed out
the importance of this area of concern. They showed that one
of the significant differences that distinguished high-level
management from positions below it was the function of external
relations, where the executives look at the issues outside of
the immediate work area that were relevant to achieving the
organization's goals (Flanders, 1983). In his study of police
executives, Witham also noted the significance of relationships
with outside groups. He stated that these relationships
"enormously facilitate accomplishment of the departmental
mission" (Witham, 1986). It seems that this potential problem
area of a "negative" type mission should be addressed (Witham,
1986).

Many governmental organizations (IRS, CIA, United States
Air Force (USAF) Security Police and Inspector General's
offices) may also experience the problem of having a mission
with the potential to negatively influence their organization's
relations and ability to function in intergroup or individual
situations. Although this research specifically addresses the
Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) detachment

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operating at the Air Force (AF) base level, parts, if not all, of the study could apply to numerous AF and other governmental agencies.

Specifically, this study will extract information on classical conditioning, attitudes, group behavior, communications, and the perception process from a literature review. This information/theory will be compared and related to AFOSI's mission, role, and interaction at the base level. The information on AFOSI was obtained from USAF regulations and interviews of AFOSI personnel and key command officials. The AFOSI Command Management Consultant, the AFOSI Deputy Chief of Staff for Training and Development, the former course manager for the Detachment Commander's Course, and the former senior instructor of the Basic AFOSI Special Agent's Course were interviewed. Six current or former AFOSI Detachment Commanders and three current or former Base Commanders were interviewed, as well as the Commandant of the USAF's Commander's Professional Development School. Finally, the paper will provide the author's opinion on possible immediate and long term recommendations for AFOSI. If organizations like AFOSI would address how the inherently negative aspects of their missions affect their image and, hence, their function, better mission accomplishment could be obtained.

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Chapter Two

BACKGROUND

AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

This paper will look at how the AFOSI image, based on
inherently negative aspects of its mission, could affect its
performance at the AF base level due to basic psychological
factors involved in individual and group behavior. But first,
AFOSI and its environment must be studied. Air Force
Regulation (AFR) 23-18 explains AFOSI's mission, functions, and
responsibilities. The activities can be divided into three
general investigative areas: 1) criminal, 2) fraud, and 3)
counterintelligence matters which affect people, personal
property, the US government, or its property. The AFOSI
Summary, Fiscal Year 1985, reveals that the vast majority of
AFOSI's missions and manpower are dedicated to its criminal and
fraud mission. In an over-simplified statement, there are more
crooks than spies in the world. This, coupled with the fact
that AFOSI's counterintelligence mission results in

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unpublicized, classified products for limited consumers,
results in most of the AF population thinking of AFOSI in the
context of its criminal or fraud mission (Lightner, 1987).
This can be carried even further in that the majority of these
cases concern narcotics, hence, many AF personnel only think of
AFOSI personnel as "narcs" (Hoffmann, 1987). This study will
concentrate on AFOSI's image based on its criminal and fraud
mission.

Since AFOSI accomplishes its mission's "critical tasks"
(Manning, 1981) through its base level-unit (the detachment),
the detachment will be the level of AFOSI addressed in this
paper. The detachment serves the needs of the USAF base
commander. AFOSI detachments are mainly concerned with
providing investigative services to one individual, the base
commander. This is done directly through him and through his
subordinate commanders. This small group of key base personnel
will be the focus of this paper. These are the people who
house, supply, and make or break AFOSI now and in the future.
Unlike most police agencies, AFOSI does not rely on the citizen
(public) attitude for support, be it financial, manning, or
initiating investigative activity.

American police agencies were based in part on a military
model imported from London (Witham, 1986); however, as pointed

out above, AFOSI is different from most police agencies. For example, P. K. Manning advised that the contrasts between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) are neatly drawn: whereas the FBI is an investigative agency which looks into crimes that have been committed, it is means oriented (attempts to evaluate the process of investigation and to reward procedural integrity) and has the benefit of public confidence and a monopolistic control over its domain; DEA (formed by Nixon in 1973 by combining the old Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs with portions of the US Customs Service) is an instigative agency which attempts to make crime happen and then intervene, is goals oriented (attempts to evaluate the extent to which cases meet programmatic objectives and goals and to reward gaining control over drug markets), and lacks a strong public mandate and monopoly within its domain (Manning, 1981). In AFOSI, "investigative agency" equates to the term "reactive" and "instigative agency" equates to "proactive." AFOSI is not only reactive like the FBI, but it is also proactive like the DEA (Moss, 1987). Unlike the FBI, AFOSI shares its domain with local, state, federal, and foreign investigative agencies (Hoffmann, 1987).

AFOSI is more of an investigative agency than a police agency (Lightner, 1987). Typical police work, like patrolling

and minor investigations, is done by the AF Security Police
(AFR 125-25). Unlike the Security Police, AFOSI does not
"work" directly for the base commander, since he is not in
their chain of command. AFOSI works directly for its
headquarters in Washington, DC. Although AFOSI is centrally
directed, the base commander does request AFOSI investigations
(AFR 124-4). There are no "complaints" (investigations
initiated) by the individual. The military victim and
witnessess can be ordered to cooperate and provide information.
Neither the victim nor the subject of the investigation ever
see the investigative report and may never know the outcome of
the investigation. The victim may never know the punishment
the criminal may or may not receive. The investigation is done
for the government (represented by the base commander), not the
individual.

Based on AFOSI's differences from police departments and
most other large investigative organizations, studies of
attitudes toward AFOSI or similar agencies, like the Naval
Investigative Service, appear scarce or non-existent. A review
of publications, like The Journal of Police Science and
Administration, only disclosed attitude research like S. H.
Decker's "Citizen Attitudes Toward the Police." These dealt
with individual-level variables like race, socioeconomic
status, age, and sex; and contextual effects like neighborhood

culture and the effects of victimization or programmatical
effects. These factors are not applicable to the military
community or AFOSI.

Chapter Three

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING AND ATTITUDES

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

Since this reseach may be breaking new ground, it starts
with a basic--classical conditioning. Classical conditioning
is based on respondent behavior. "Respondent behavior takes in
all responses of human beings that are elicited by special
stimulus changes in the environment. For example, when a
person turns a light on in a dark room (stimulus change), the
pupils of his eyes contract (respondent behavior)" (Organ and
Hamner, 1982). The process of learning or acquiring this
reflex behavior is called classical conditioning.

> [It] is a process in which a reflex or emotional
> response comes under the control of a new stimulus.
> This happens when the new stimulus is associated with,
> or immediately precedes, the stimulus which already
> elicits the reflex. . . . For our purposes, however,
> the major relevance of classical conditioning lies in
> its ability to account for certain emotional
> responses. An emotional response, like a reflex, is
> involuntary. . . . Also, these emotional responses

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can represent the core component around which attitudes and attitude systems develop, with corresponding systems of beliefs. . . . Consider, for example, your emotional responses toward certain people. . . you may dislike or fear someone whose behavior produces harm or discomfort. . . you can now easily understand why some people in organizations become objects of fear or dislike. They do not actually cause or produce the events that make us angry or unhappy, but their presence--because of their job duties--is associated typically and closely with such events, in both time and place (Organ and Hamner, 1982).

Consider now the tasks of the AFOSI detachment in relation to the base commander. One of AFOSI's primary functions is to keep the commander informed of all the undesirable (illegal) activity occuring on his base and AFOSI's attempts to locate more crime so that it can be neutralized (Lightner, 1987). Because of this, one of AFOSI's unofficial mottos could be: "Don't shoot the messenger" (Fashion; Mckee; Minnigerode; Tibbetts, 1987). How much comfort can the commander receive from statements like, "Two children were murdered in their base quarters this morning," or "50% of squadron X is using marijuana while on duty," or "The Soviets obtained War Plan Y from one of our airmen." Even good news from AFOSI does not cause comfort or make a commander happy. Consider the effect of: "We caught 50% of Squadron X smoking marijuana on duty," or "Two children were murdered on base this morning, but we caught the murderer," or "We caught company X overcharging us $10,000 for that wrench." Meanwhile, the commander knows that he will receive the Golden Fleece Award for paying $10,000 too much for

a wrench, even though it was "his" AFOSI that caught the contractor. Surely, when the commander sees AFOSI on his calendar, it does not elicit a warm, comfortable feeling, but perhaps an uneasy, unhappy, even an angry, emotional response to anticipating undesirable news. True, these examples concern serious crimes or impact on the AF mission to illustrate the point, but these examples happen frequently throughout the AF. Insert the major crime of your choice (AFOSI does not usually investigate minor criminal acts) in the above statements to measure your response.

ATTITUDES

Has this response created an attitude about AFOSI? "Most definitions seem to agree that an attitude is a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli" (Oppenheim, 1966). These attitudes have varying intensity. They also have different levels. The most superficial levels are beliefs, next are attitudes, deeper levels are values, and still deeper levels are personalities (Oppenheim, 1966). Attitudes are highly emotional, irrational, illogical, and arouse defenses. "Krech and Crutchfield (1948) have stressed the importance of feelings

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of being 'for or against' something and having 'positive or negative affect' in distinguishing attitudes from opinions" (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960). Based on this thinking, it would appear that AFOSI's mission and relationship with a base commander could easily condition him into having a negative emotional response to AFOSI. This could establish a very superficial negative attitude toward the organization or its personnel (the AFOSI detachment commander). However, all three of the Base Commanders interviewed stated that seeing AFOSI on their calendar failed to cause any "feelings" at all. One Commander advised that seeing AFOSI on his calendar only told him that something serious was on its way. Another Commander advised that although he was not concerned, his staff stated they were very concerned to see AFOSI on their calendar.

DISSONANCE THEORY

The commander could have two conflicting thoughts at this point. He knows what AFOSI is doing is correct; however, it "hurts" and he would like it to stop. The theory of dissonance could be a player at this point in the scenerio. The theory's "core notions . . . are that the simultaneous existence of cognitions which in one way or another do not fit together

(dissonance) leads to effort on the part of the person to somehow make them fit better" (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). In general, the base commander may attempt to convince himself that the content area is relatively unimportant; he may attempt to derogate the person, change his or the other person's input, or he may seek additional social support for the opinion he holds, thus, in essence, adding new cognitions which are consonant with his own opinions (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). This may be one of the reasons that five of the six AFOSI Detachment Commanders interviewed advised that others were always present when they routinely briefed the base commander. The other AFOSI Commander advised that others were present 50% of the time when he briefed the base commander. What is the reason for this "group" meeting? Is it time saving, coordination, or subconscious dissonance?

This chapter has illustrated that dissonance theory, attitudes, and classical conditioning can affect individual relationships. The following activities could lessen or negate any possible impact from these factors. To avoid "classical conditioning" of the base commander, AFOSI personnel could consciously attempt to associate themselves with "good news," or events. For example, if the base commander likes the Special Olympics, AFOSI could help support them, or AFOSI could just go to the Officers Club for drinks and jokes, if this is

where the base commander experiences his "good times." These
activities would also positively affect any potential attitude
or dissonance problems. By being aware of these basic
psychological reactions and utilizing a little preventative
maintenance, AFOSI could enhance its relations with both
individuals and groups.

Chapter Four

GROUP DYNAMICS

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The USAF is a very social and group-oriented
organization--only the term "group" is replaced by "team."
Team effort, team player, team member are common phrases in all
branches of the US military, not just the AF. The team concept
is the basis for practically all functions. The military
rarely puts up with a loner, no matter what his capabilities.
This stressing of membership is true not only professionally,
but socially. For example, AF Brigadier General Delligatti
advised that all officers should join and belong to the
Officers' Club (Delligatti, 1987). Wives should join and
participate in the Officers' Wives' Club (Burke, 1987).
Everyone, children included, are part of the "Air Force
Family."

The base commander and his staff are the head of this family as well as being the key team members (main players) at the base level. The AFOSI detachment commander should be a member of the base commander's team. However, General Delligatti felt that AFOSI, the Security Police, and some other support organizations were an exception to this base team concept. They were not really team players, nor were they really on the team (Delligatti, 1987). This team (group) is seen at any weekly base commander's staff meeting. The team is a small group that deals one-on-one with each other to provide the leadership, skill, and management to run the base (Delligatti, 1987). They are the key base personnel who make or break AFOSI (Hoffmann, 1987). This "primary group" is usually made up of full colonels, many with the potential for future advancement in the general officer ranks. How does one characterize this group?

> Primary group. A small group characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. The result of this intimate association is a fusion of individualities into a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Primary groups are the principal social units through which values and ideals are imparted and social control exercised. . . For the purposes of this study, we draw on Janowitz to define a "military profession" as an association of military members with five essential characteristics: (1) skill in the services they offer their clients; (2) trustworthy to each other and to their clients; (3) personal welfare subordinated to professional duties; (4) a high degree of self-regulation; and (5) strong corporate cohesion (Defense Management Studies Group on Military

Cohesion, 1984).

The rest of this chapter will deal with how AFOSI's activities (mission) impact on the group's "cooperation," "wholeness" (Bonner, 1959), "trustworthiness," and "cohesion."

GROUP STRUCTURE

Every group has a unique "personality." This is due in part to the uniqueness of each member of the group, but it is also due to the structure of the group. When individuals join together for the first time and interact with one another, differences will develop among the members of the new group. Some persons exert more influence than others. Some have more prestige, some more influence, and some more knowledge. Group structure can be defined as the relatively stable pattern of relationships among members within a group (Organ and Hamner, 1982).

This is especially true of the base commander's staff concerning rank, position, and mission, when taking into account influence, prestige, and knowledge exerted. These relationships have a stable pattern among its members, except for AFOSI. Usually, the AFOSI commander is the junior member of this group in all areas: rank, position, and mission. In light of the main mission of "fly and fight," investigations are not critical (Delligatti, 1987). A review of a list of staff meeting attendees disclosed 21 military members out-ranked the AFOSI detachment commander and only three

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members did not. One of these was a captain and the other two
were enlisted personnel (Dierlam, 1987). However, this stable
pattern of rank, position, and mission can appear to change
instantly if AFOSI is investigating one of the staff or a top
subordinate (guilt by association) or apprehends a large number
of personnel from another staff member's organization. This
degrades his mission, capability, status, and position, and
raises questions as to his management and leadership
capabilities. Any "perceived inequity can have a detrimental
effect on the performance and on the satisfaction of individual
members in a group and thus on group productivity and morale"
(Organ and Hammer, 1982). Obviously, this shift in influence,
prestige, and knowledge (of the other member's organization,
function, weaknesses, and personnel, which was unknown to even
them) could have a negative effect on AFOSI's relations with
that individual, as well as the other group members. This sort
of temporary, fluctuating "status" is only indirectly
referenced in most literature as the lack of stable factors (a
negative group influence). Supposedly, a group should have
stabilized roles assigned which are then arranged in order of
importance or status (Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

The above disruption of the group's organizational
structure could partially lie in the problem of the distinction
between line and staff functions.

> Classical writers carefully distinguished between the
> line, which performs the major functions of the
> organization, and staff, the offices which provide
> support, service, and advice to line officials.
> Formal authority follows the line; staff officials
> have no line authority but rather an advisory role.
> Only over other, junior staff specialists should
> staff officers exert authority (Organ and Hamner,
> 1981).

AFOSI is a service and support organization that works a
staff function for the base commander, who exerts the authority
(Hoffmann, 1987). In situations like the above (where AFOSI
investigates a fellow staff member, directly or indirectly),
the illusion that AFOSI is exerting authority is given. This
could further frustrate senior line officers, both on the base
commander's "staff" and those not on it. This could produce a
greater negative effect on AFOSI's image and the group itself.
"The continued existence of a group as an effective force
depends on maintaining its organizational structure" (Berne,
1963).

GROUP CULTURE

The ultimate purpose of this structure is to protect the
public from foreign and domestic threats. But, like all
government organizations, the members of the base commander's

staff are also "public managers." As public managers their

position has been described as follows:

> There is a distrust and disdain evident in the
> public's view of the governmental bureaucracy.
> Public managers are given considerable resources and
> broad discretion for administering programs, but are
> subjected to an array of laws, procedures, and norms
> intended to closely control their behavior. While
> entrusted with large amounts of money and
> administrative power, they are deluged with judicial
> rulings, "golden fleece" awards, beat reporters,
> taxpayer revolts, and legislative investigations, not
> to mention freedom of information maxims,
> administrative procedure dictates and performance
> audits (Whorton and Worthley, 1981).

Whorton and Worthley's concept is that all organizations

have a culture that affects both the individual and group

behavior in a predictable way. Under this concept the AF has a

culture which is expressed at the base level by the commander's

staff. "The pressure is in favor of the individual supporting

the norms and beliefs of the culture rather than those voicing

beliefs that run counter to the culture" (Whorton and Worthley,

1981). The array of laws, procedures, and norms, which

commanders are subjected to as public managers, could cause

them to form a bond of kinship in defense of the public's and

Congress's apparent distrust of them (Delligatti, 1987; Burke,

1987). AFOSI would not share in this kinship since its role

would be counter to this aspect of the organization's culture.

AFOSI would appear to be the public's instrument to closely

control the staff's behavior based on the public's distrust and

disdain of government bureaucracy. This also affects the group

(Romzek, 1980). In fact, studies show that some "members

remain in some groups because these bodies protect participants

from menacing outside events" (Zander, 1982). All three of the

Base Commanders interviewed felt AFOSI could be viewed as an

outside menace rather than a supportive group member (Burke,

1987; Delligatti, 1987; Dierlam, 1987).

GROUP COHESIVENESS

Culture would also affect the group's cohesiveness

("mutual beliefs and needs that cause people to act as a

collective whole" (Henderson, 1985)) since AFOSI's success

(detecting fraud) appears to cause the group's failure (loss of

face, allowing the crime to occur and/or go undetected, or face

public scrutiny). Would this have an unconscious or conscious

negative effect on the other group members since ". . .

participants also try to prevent unwanted conditions within the

unit, including embarrassment over poor output, inefficient

procedures for accomplishing tasks, and unfavorable relations

with agents who make demands of the group" (Zander, 1982).

It would appear that AFOSI, as a group member, lacks the

"spirit" of the group, the "cement" binding together group

members by maintaining their relationships to one another, or, in other words, cohesiveness--the average resultant force acting on members with direction toward the group (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). How would this appearance of non-cohesiveness affect the way the other group members felt about the AFOSI group member?

> A study of informal groups within the Air Force led Gross to distinguish two types of groups: a symbiotic group, composed of men with dissimilar characteristics, where attraction is based upon different contributions that one member can make to another, and a consensual group made up of men with similar characteristics. He concludes that symbiotic relationships provide a more stable basis for attraction than do consensual ones (Cartwright and Zander, 1968).

Although the above study was on informal groups and the commander's staff is a formal group, the message is the same concerning group behavior and AFOSI. Any appearance of working against the group or group goal could be deadly to AFOSI's group membership status. AFOSI should attempt to make up for its negative mission aspects by using positive personal actions. In other words, AFOSI should be aware of its mission's impact on the group and attempt to take compensating, neutralizing, or corrective action so that its group membership is enhanced.

> Investigators believe that the improved interpersonal relations involved in an increase in cohesiveness lead to more acceptance, trust, and confidence among

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members and that each member consequently develops a
sense of security and personal worth (Cartwright and
Zander, 1968).

Studies have shown that members of groups working together
toward a common goal (cooperative groups) like each other more
than those groups that work independently toward a common goal
(competitive groups) (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). It would
appear that the worst case scenario would be a "competitor"
working in a "cooperative group." Is AFOSI, working on the
commander's staff, an example of this worst case scenario?

Whether it is or not, "cohesion" should be of interest to
AFOSI. Cohesion refers to the degree to which members of a
group are willing to subordinate their individual welfare to
that of the group and to conform to the standards of behavior,
or norms, of the group. Also, structuralization or full
structuring of group positions (mentioned above under the
heading of "GROUP STRUCTURE") gives the group more control over
the individual members (Defense Management Study Group on
Military Cohesion, 1984). One must use a 180 degree "reverse"
perspective when looking at the studies done on cohesion. The
AFOSI staff member should not be bonded to the group so that he
subjugates his mission for "perceived" group benefit, or for
his own personal reasons like group acceptance; however, he
must still maintain his group membership and relationships.
There are four ways of evading the group pressure to conform:

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deception, rejection, opposition, and conformity (Baird and Weinberg, 1981). For AFOSI to enhance its position in the group it should appear to conform (deception) or conform where possible, since "It is a commonplace observation that the members of an enduring group are likely to display a striking homogeneity of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior" (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). In strongly cohesive groups, members will conform to standards of behavior because of the heavy stress the group places on them (Defense Mangement Study Group on Military Cohesion, 1984).

GROUP NORMS

These group standards of behavior are called group norms. They can be formal, written, or informal and unwritten in nature. What would it be like without group norms?

> Imagine yourself in a group situation where you had no idea what the other group members were going to do. The guy sitting next to you might talk with you rationally, hit you with a two-by-four, jump on his chair and scream like a chicken, or do anything else that occurs to him. In fact, imagine that none of the members had the foggiest idea of what the others would do. Probably all of you would be a bit tense. Certainly, the last thing on your mind would be the group goal; rather, you would sit there quivering with fear, trying to predict what would happen next. Obviously, situations such as these are less than

Ideal (Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

Is this the perception of how AFOSI plays the "group game"? AFOSI sits there smiling and talking to you while their agents are back in your work area covertly reviewing your records in search of illegal activity because one of your co-workers is defrauding the government. While talking to you, is the AFOSI commander thinking of his briefing to the base commander? Was the AFOSI briefing the base commander on you right before the meeting to obtain a search warrant for your office? None of this is known to you until after the fact. Obviously, this rarely happens, but does the AFOSI image make it seem more likely in the minds of the other group members? AFOSI's mission and subsequent method of operation frequently break group norms. "Norms being the rules of conduct established by the members of the group to maintain behaviorial consistency. . ."(Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

As soon as a group is formed, it begins to develop its own rules and norms (Baird and Weinberg, 1981). Cohesion is based on the acceptance of group norms, but once cohesion is achieved it is not necessarily permanent. Therefore, the group develops a system to detect any deviation of the norm so that cohesion is maintained. Violators are identified and become the focus of group pressures (Henderson, 1985). "In-group" and "out-group" relations have been used to describe this degree of

social distance. This concept measures the extent of acceptance or rejection of persons in group relationships based on their fitting the group's norms (Bonner, 1959). Norms can be broken into two types: pivotal and peripheral. Pivotal norms are those which must be followed if the group is to survive. Groups typically develop pivotal norms of their own. "Attendance at a meeting usually is a norm since the group can hardly function if no one shows up. Others might include respect for the other members,...fairness to everyone, . . ." and so on. "On the other hand, peripheral norms specify behaviors which are desirable but which are not crucial to group survival. Not interrupting other members, not using obscene language, wearing certain clothes. . ." are some of these. (Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

Perhaps one of the reasons that AFOSI is allowed to deviate from the group norms to such an extent is because of the base commander and a concept called "idiosyncratic credits." This concept operates on a sort of banking principle. Every time group members contribute to the group, conform to group norms, or perform some behavior of which the group approves, a deposit is made in the member's idiosyncratic credit banks. Every time the members do something which the group does not like, such as deviating from a group norm, withdrawal is taken from the banks (Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

Rather than "accumulated status" protecting the
"nonconformist" AFOSI from punishment, it could be AFOSI's
relationship with the base commander that gives it the
"credits" it needs to maintain its status in the group. As
illustrated in the preceding paragraphs, AFOSI's relationship
with the commander is different from that of other group
members.

Idiosyncratic credit, group structure, culture, and
cohesiveness are all factors that can influence AFOSI's mission
accomplishment. To further enhance this mission accomplishment
the following actions should be considered. Since group
structure is based on stable patterns and perceived inequality
is undesirable, AFOSI should stress that it is a service
organization. It is there to serve the base commander and his
staff. AFOSI should avoid the inference that it exercises
authority. It should ensure the USAF knows that AFOSI is
acting on the base commander's behalf and authority. This
would also help deflate any group culture problems by
illustrating AFOSI is not the public's, but the commander's
instrument. To increase its group standing and increase the
group's cohesiveness, AFOSI could attempt to counter any
negative professional group impact--like running a fraud
investigation on the Supply Squadron Commander--by routinely

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providing positive personal group input. AFOSI should also
attempt to conform to group norms where possible. The AFOSI
detachment commander should consider wearing a uniform and
other acts to appease the group. If this is not possible, then
AFOSI should at least "appear" to conform to group norms.
Another possiblity is to have the base commander endorse
AFOSI's breaking the norms--for operational reasons--to use the
commander's "idiosyncratic credit" for group approval.

Chapter Five

COMMUNICATION

A crucial element to recognize about group norms is that they come about through communication. Rules are established and enforced through verbal and nonverbal cues; roles are assigned and changed through group interaction; social climates improve or deteriorate according to the member's communication behavior (Baird and Weinberg, 1981). "Recent researchers have made abundantly clear that group solidarity and cohesion depend on effective communication (Bonner, 1959). Communication is defined as "the process involving the transmission and reception of symbols eliciting meaning in the minds of the participants" (Baird and Weinberg, 1981).

UNIT IDENTITY

W. P. Margulies (1979) in his article on corporate image,

stresses how corporations are perceived and valued based on the image projected by effectively communicating the corporate identity. He states that "other things being equal, a company that communicates well is going to fare better." He lists several "guidelines," like "examine the corporate structure. . . . . It is important that a company be perceived as a sum of its parts rather than as a fragmented entity" (Margulies, 1979). Rarely does an AFOSI consumer receive a complete AFOSI mission briefing. Five of the six AFOSI Detachment Commanders interviewed advised that they had never given a "complete" AFOSI mission briefing at the base level. The Defense Logistics Agency receives a fraud mission briefing. Training bases generally receive criminal briefings. Intelligence functions receive a counterintelligence briefing. High ranking dignitaries receive the protective service detail briefing on AFOSI's capability to provide them security (Lightner, 1987). The AFOSI mission covers the functions of local, state, and federal police agencies. This includes the FBI, DEA, US Secret Service, CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Investigative Agency, US Customs, and foreign agencies (Moss, 1987). Thus a complete briefing (sum of its parts) is difficult if one strives for clarity and impact, not volume. The problem could be viewed as an example of "selective transmissions." This is where the transmitter only tells the receiver what he thinks the latter wants to or should hear.

"Communication leads to group disruption not only under circumstances of restriction" (covered later in this chapter) "and breakdown, but frequently under conditions of selective transmission" (Bonner, 1959).

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Types of communications are also a problem for AFOSI as a member of the base commander's staff (group). The group (except AFOSI) routinely uses an all-channel communications pattern (Delligatti, 1987). This is where the group communicates without restriction, in all directions, to all members (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). The staff discusses their progress, set-backs, for the benefit of the base commander and the group. AFOSI deals in human lives and reputations, "close hold" information, publicly embarrassing information, and situtions awaiting adjudication. Therefore, they only brief the base commander, probably the commander whose unit is involved, and those with a "need to know," like the legal officer, not the group. During the actual base staff meetings, the base commander goes around the room asking for individual inputs from all the staff members. All the Detachment Commanders interviewed advised that AFOSI is one of

the few, or only, organizations to routinely say "Nothing, Sir." Again, this may alienate the group by not following the group norm (all-channel communication) but using more of a "wheel" type of communication. Using the "wheel," group members would not communicate with each other but only with the "hub" (base commander) of the group (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). This is a potential problem to AFOSI's group relationships. Most of the group only observe AFOSI's actions, or worst yet, hear rumors of it, without the benefit of an explanation to provide a meaning to the action. This is important since

> Both the shared meaning and retrospective-sense-making accounts of the relationship between meaning and action implicitly acknowledge the central role of communication in that relationship. For example, Mead (1934) identified language as the vehicle through which consensus in a group develops. Others (e.g. Van Maanen, 1979; Pfeffeer, 1981; Smircich, 1983) have more recently argued from this perspective (Donnellon, Gray, and Bougon, 1986).

COMMUNICATION NORMS

Another unique communications problem for AFOSI is its use of human sources (informants). Under this form of intelligence gathering, the commander's staff could be further alienated. AFOSI recruits one of the other commander's personnel to work covertly for AFOSI, as a spotter for illegal activity. This is

done without the commander's specific knowledge or permission. Several areas are affected. The commander questions his "troops'" loyalty to their organization and the concerned commander. Why will his employees tell AFOSI, but not their superiors or himself? If information is developed, occasionally the concerned commander cannot be briefed due to operational or security considerations; however, the base commander must be briefed in order for him to request the investigation (Hoffmann, 1987). This results in the concerned commander being cut out of the communications pattern altogether. AFOSI may then be perceived as going "over his head" or "back-dooring" him, again causing additional frustration and alienation between AFOSI and the group. Perhaps this could be rationalized as enforcing the group's norms (obeying the law). But the commander in question did not break the law. Even if he did, this method of enforcing standards is now recommended in a group because the distrust it generates is harmful and results in group disruption due to a decrease in communication (Zander, 1982).

COMMUNICATION RESTRICTION

When AFOSI has to conduct activities like those identified

In the preceding paragraphs and chapters, it sometimes results
in individuals being hesitant to talk to or associate with
AFOSI personnel. Sometimes a definite "coolness" can be
detected in some or all of the group members. All six of the
Detachment Commanders interviewed had experienced this
"coolness."

> When communications between individuals is
> restricted, or when it breaks down altogether,
> persons form stereotyped attitudes towards others.
> Since they do not or cannot check their own
> observations of others, they develop private opinions
> of them. While not all restricted communication
> inevitably leads to stereotyped attitudes, much of it
> does result in the type of distortion of the
> intention of others that is characteristic of the
> isolated person. This distortion often breeds
> hostility toward other members of the group. The
> "audistic hostility," as Newcomb calls it, is
> encouraged by restrictions or barriers to
> communication. Adequate communication (that is,
> communication which entails no threat to the
> members), on the other hand, reduces hostility
> between them, for it encourages comparisons and
> modifies members' attitudes toward each other
> (Bonner, 1959).

Five of the six Detachment Commanders advised that most
initial contacts by AFOSI personnel with other Air Force
personnel disclose a stereotyped image of AFOSI which must be
overcome before any personal relationship can exist. This
could be because the stereotyped image creates distrust of
AFOSI personnel. The "outside world" may perceive AFOSI in a
framework of threat and respond to its personnel defensively.

AFOSI must recognize that the communication of hazard information introduces distinctive communications demands on the communicator (Perry and Nigg, 1985). This is probably true of threatening information also. Perry and Nigg examined the process of communicating hazard information to the general public. They found that agency credibility, legitimacy and recognition were critical factors (Perry and Nigg, 1985). However, AFOSI's situation is somewhat different than dealing with the general public. AFOSI is also different since it deals more in "threatening" information than in "hazard" information. As stated initially in this paper, this area of concern has yet to be specifically addressed. Until it is, "real-world" administrators must make assumptions based on what related research is available.

Assumptions are also needed in determining ways to minimize potential negative affects in the communications area. It would appear that AFOSI should stress more complete briefings to its consumers rather than its current fragmented briefings. As stated in the last chapter, AFOSI should at least appear to meet the group communication norms. In the area of communication style, AFOSI should also attempt to conform. Rather than saying "Nothing, Sir," at the base commander's staff meeting, it should provide some generic information. It could brief on local narcotics prices and

availability, or the number of, or type of, investigations being opened, conducted, or closed. Lastly, AFOSI should actively attempt to overcome any communication restrictions to counter any stereotyped image or perception of AFOSI.

Chapter Six

PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions encompass all the above aspects of the AFOSI

role. "A fundamental problem in social psychology is the

relationship between an individual's behavior and how that

behavior is perceived and evaluated by others" (Cartwright and

Zander, 1968). "In the process of perceiving, the whole person

is involved, with his past and present, with all his previous

frustrations, gratifications, present strivings and capacities

as well as determinants coming from the actual stimulus

conditions" (Sherif and Wilson, 1953). So, according to this

view, all of the aspects and ramifications of the preceding

chapters are considered by the staff and the base commander,

either consciously or unconsciously, when they view or

"perceive" AFOSI.

    Perception is the process by which individuals
    select, organize, store, and interpret sensory
    stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of
    the world around us (Berelson and Steiner, 1964).
    Our brain does not passively "register" all stimuli
    that surround us. We take an active role in

selecting what we perceive. . . . One could argue
that we do not really "perceive" others at all. We
perceive only their immediate behavior and their most
obvious physical characteristics. . . . In observing
others' behavior, we seem to have a strong bias
toward an inference of internal causation. Heider
(1958) concluded that a major bias in social
perception is the tendency to see persons and not
situations as the cause of action. This is
especially the case when the situational forces are
subtle or complex. Our attention is drawn toward the
person, and our limited attention span may not
incorporate other stimuli in the situation that might
cause the behavior (Organ and Hamner, 1982).

If AF personnel used only this perception process and did
not concern themselves with AFOSI's real traits, motives,
abilities, and other stable attributes, a definite perception
problem could exist. AFOSI must ensure it provides the other,
obvious stimuli to the situation to enchance understanding of
the situation so that AFOSI is not the victim of perception
bias.

ORGANIZATIONAL SYMBOLISM

The term organizational symbolism refers to those
aspects of an organization that its members use to
reveal or make comprehensible the unconscious
feelings, images, and values that are inherent in
that organization. Symbolism expresses the
underlying character, ideology, or value system of an
organization. In making this character
comprehensible, symbols can reinforce it or can
expose it to criticism and modification (Mitroff,
Dandridge, and Joyce, 1980).

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Mitroff said there are three types of symbols: 1) material, like organizational logos; 2) ritual, like the right to gain access; and 3) verbal, like myths or legends. It would appear that symbols are those aspects of the organization seen by outsiders as revealing the underlying character of AFOSI. Under material symbols, the following atypical (to the Air Force) actions are pertinent. First is the fact that AFOSI special agents may arm (carry weapons) by their own choice (AFR 124-26). Second, they can obtain waivers to AF grooming standards (grow long hair and beards). They also drive an unmarked government vehicle, and then they can drive (when on call) this vehicle to their on-base or off-base home (usually the prerogative of the senior officer on the installation if they live on base and no one's prerogative for off-base homes). Finally, they wear civilian clothes rather than the uniform (AFR 124-2) that the rest of the personnel on base are wearing. Do these symbols represent AFOSI as a rule-breaker, or as a powerful, prestigious organization, or just an "outsider"? Ritual symbols will not be addressed in this study as they would not usually be observed by an outsider, and it is AFOSI's relationship with those individuals that is the concern. Verbal symbols are rumors (myths/legends); for example, AFOSI has undercover agents in every squadron, office, dorm, etc. (Delligatti, 1987). It would appear these factors make AFOSI out as a "loner," non-team player, and outsider--all of which

are undesirable in the military.

APPEARANCE

As the preceeding paragraph pointed out, AFOSI is usually
the only military member on the commander's staff to wear
civilian clothing. Five of the six AFOSI Detachment Commanders
interviewed advised that one of the most frequently asked
questions of AFOSI special agents is why they wear civilian
clothes rather than the AF uniform.

> Although we repeatedly are told that we can't judge a
> book by its cover, a great deal of evidence exists
> demonstrating that we do precisely that--we judge
> people, at least initially, on the basis of their
> appearance. And these judgments have significant
> impact on our reactions to those people. . . .One
> aspect of appearance, clothing, seems particularly
> important. . . .Certainly, the preceding studies
> ought not lead you to the conclusion that you always
> should wear a suit and tie--in some groups such dress
> would make you an immediate outcast. Perhaps the
> principle which we can draw from all this is that
> specific groups typically value certain forms of
> dress. . . . If you discover what form of dress is
> preferred by your group and then adopt that form,
> your status and influence will probably rise. . . .If
> you want to increase your standing in a group, you
> may do so by wearing the things they value (Baird and
> Weinberg, 1981).

Should AFOSI detachmant commanders wear uniforms? This
question is even more significant if one considers that
according to Raymond Birdwhistell (1955), an appropriately

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named authority on nonverbal communication, in face-to-face

interaction nonverbal messages account for approximately

two-thirds of the total meaning produced. Based on this it

would appear that, in most cases, the individual AFOSI

representative is not utilizing his appearence to increase his

"standing," "status," or "influence" in the group.

ROLE DYNAMICS

This impact on "status" and "influence" is important since

an individual's "role" in a group

> derives its meaning from the status of the person who
> "occupies" a role. Status (also called position) and
> role are inseparable. It is a set of rights and
> duties, as Linton pointed out. These rights and
> duties determine the individual's "place" or position
> in the group or community. In view of this position
> or status the individual can expect, through a long
> process of socialization, certain forms of response
> and behavicr from others, and others, in turn, can
> anticipate definite reactions from him, for these
> responses or reactions are determined by the set of
> rights and duties embedded in the culture. A role on
> the other hand, refers to the action performed by an
> individual who holds a certain status, in
> anticipation of others' expectations (Bonner, 1959).

Like this author, Bonner is stating that AFOSI's role is

deeply affected by its status, which is the individual's place

or position in the group. This project takes this a step

further than Bonner, and says that this status is affected

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(judged) by an organizational image caused by the unit's mission.

UNIT IDENTITY

L. D. Ackerman (1983) maintains that a corporation is judged in a large part through its identity. He states that companies are always perceived and evaluated by identity in relative terms, both with regard to current performance and future expectations. In 1985, action was taken against 78% of AFOSI's suspects (US Department of the Air Force AFOSI Summary, 1986). This means the AFOSI investigative report had sufficient evidence of wrong doing for the AF to discipline the suspect in question. Based on this, it appears AFOSI would have a strong performance image. Ackerman goes on to evaluate companies based on comparing external and internal images. However, the internal AFOSI image is not being addressed in this effort. It is obvious that AFOSI has a strong external image. The question continues to be, does this strong image have certain unavoidable negative connotations based on AFOSI's mission?

This chapter on perceptions used symbolism, appearance, role dynamics, and unit identity to illustrate the importance

of an organization's actions, appearances, and its group "role." All of these factors are deeply interrelated and to some degree, driven by AFOSI's mission.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, to show that certain image problems caused by an organization's mission are based on scientific principles, assumptions, and research. And, second, to make recommendations on how an organization can recognize and address this neglected problem area. To illustrate this, basic psychological effects of AFOSI's mission, in regard to its image as a functioning team member of the AF staff at the working level (AF base), were shown. Illustrations in the areas of classical conditioning, attitudes, group cohesiveness/communication/norms and role assignments, organizational culture, effectively communicating its identity, perceptions, and organizational symbolism were given. If organizations would formally address how these inherently negative aspects of their missions affect their image and hence their function, better mission accomplishment could be obtained.

FINDING

From this exploratory research should emerge many
questions, and hopefully concerns, that will spur additional
efforts in this area to fully understand the ramifications of
AFOSI's mission on its performance. However, sufficient
findings were noted in classical conditioning, group dynamics,
communications, and perceptions for this area to be officially
acknowledged and addressed by AFOSI. Follow-up action could be
two phased: immediate action and longer term follow-up.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate Actions

The following immediate steps could be taken with minimum
cost and effort. They could be incorporated into AFOSI
programs that are now in effect. These additional efforts
could significantly enhance AFOSI's knowledge on the above

factors without necessitating elaborate, time-consuming, or resource draining activities. First, a ficticious "case study" could be used in the AFOSI "basic special agent" course to sensitize new personnel to some of the unique aspects of AFOSI and their possible ramificants. Currently the course does not directly address or provide any class time on how basic psychological factors impact on AFOSI's relations with outside organizations or personnel (Taylor, 1987). A less basic case study could be used during the AFOSI Detachment Commander's Course. This would give these future AFOSI commanders a "heads-up" on possible relationship problems they might encounter in their upcoming duties. According to the former course manager, this topic is not formally addressed; however, it occasionally comes up during classroom discussions with "guest" base commanders (Minnigerode, 1987). The case study could be utilized as either an in-class project or simply as "take-home" reading. Of course, if this research is totally embraced, it could be sent out as general field training or exclusively to AFOSI Commanders. A more effective, but limited, method of introduction to the field would be by the AFOSI Command Management Consultant. The material could be presented and explained to the field during his various field training seminars. These seminars could be very useful by providing interaction with our experts, in contrast to "one-shot" briefings or readings. Currently, these seminars

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address internal AFOSI team building and the positive aspects of the AFOSI image. For example, how to build relationships as a confidant due to the interpersonal value of honesty and the organizational value of integrity (Watkins, 1987). There are several additional efforts that could be mounted against targeted audiences, not just against AFOSI itself. For example, one AFOSI detachment commander initiated a monthly meeting with all other commanders on the base to provide detailed briefings on the "sum" of AFOSI rather than just the "parts." Then, at follow-up meetings, he expanded on this and explained the month's AFOSI activities to clarify any real or potential misunderstandings. This liaison with other agencies, including discussion of and dissemination of information on AFOSI and its actions, greatly assisted in future efforts with those units (Arnold, 1986). The author started attending formal base functions in his mess dress uniform rather than in a tuxedo, as his predecessors had done. The verbal and facial approval of this action was totally positive.

Longer-Term Actions

If the above programs are deemed valuable, over time they could be permenantly incorporated into the AFOSI method of operation. Of course, more manpower-intensive investigations and research of this area is necessary and has already been

recommended. The AF has a Base Commander's Course just as AFOSI has a Detachment Commander's Course. At the Base Commander's Course, AFOSI already briefs its mission (Burke, 1987). Perhaps this area should also be covered with the commanders (all attendees must have at least six months in the job for attendance) and (or) a survey of their "feelings" taken to verify this paper's assertions concerning classical conditioning. Base commanders are the key factor in this formula. It is the commander and his staff that AFOSI, a service organization, is attempting to assist (Moss, 1987). To a certain degree they also house, feed, and "adopt" the local AFOSI (Hoffmann, 1987). It is critical for AFOSI to maintain a good relationship with the base commander.

These proposals are not exhaustive, but rather serve to illustrate what can be done with the mechanisms that are already in place. As this study confesses, it is a first brush in many areas and further study, research, and action is required. The study's secondary objectives are to inform and stimulate thought in this previously neglected area.

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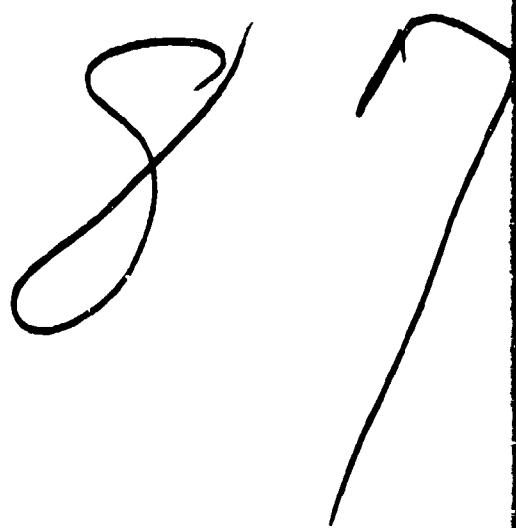45. Hinton, B. L. and H. J. Reitz. Groups and Organizations. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1971.
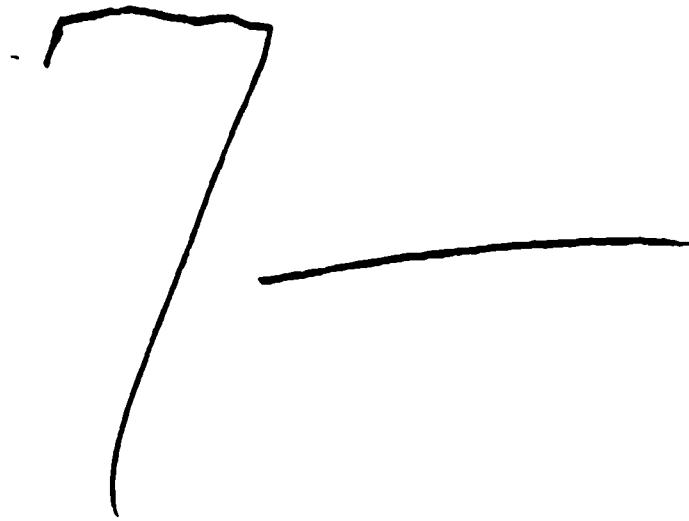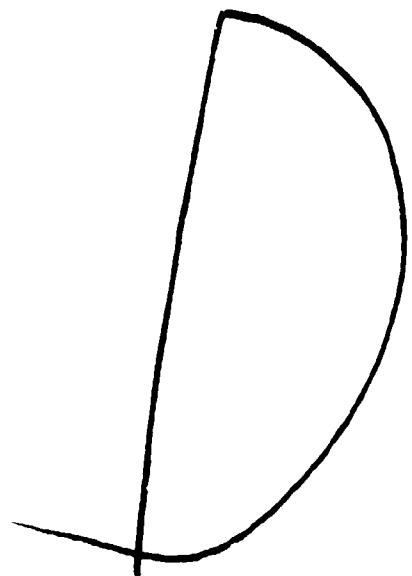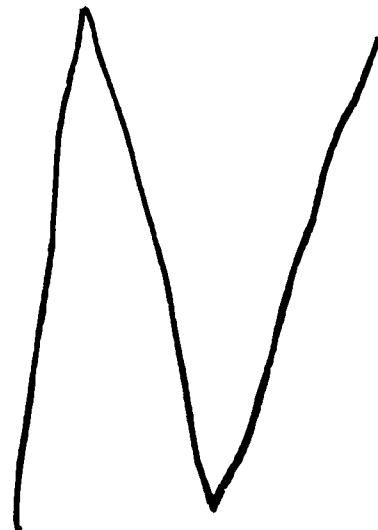
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